

Diabetes is a chronic condition in which the body is not able to control and properly use the amount of glucose (a form of sugar) in the blood. Glucose is needed by the body to produce energy, but too much or too little, may lead to problems and complications. There are two main types of diabetes, type-1 and type-2. The focus of this document is Type-1.

Who gets Type-1 Diabetes?

Type-1 diabetes is also called insulin-dependent diabetes or juvenile diabetes. About 5-10% of people with diabetes have type-1. It can develop at any age, but often occurs in children, teenagers, or young adults.

What are the symptoms?

- Frequent urination and excessive thirst.
- Increased appetite and weight loss.
- Fatigue.
- General ill feeling.
- Blurred vision.
- Itching around the genitals.
- Increased risk of infections, such as urinary-tract infections and yeast infections of the skin, mouth, or vagina.

Causes

With type 1 diabetes, little or no insulin is made by the pancreas. Insulin is a hormone necessary for proper use of energy (sugar) in the body. Complications may arise if insulin is not available or it doesn't work properly. Type 1 diabetes is one of a group of autoimmune disorders where the immune system mistakenly attacks the body itself. Why this occurs is still unknown. Other possible factors include a viral infection or injury to the pancreas.

Complications of Type-1 Diabetes

Symptoms and progress of the disease can be controlled with a treatment program. Some possible complications include:

- Heart and blood vessel diseases.
- Kidney damage.
- Blindness.
- Nerve damage (neuropathy).
- Life-threatening hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) if too much insulin is used.
- Life-threatening ketoacidosis (very high blood sugar) with breakdown of body cells.

Risks, Prevention & Treatment

Risk increases with family history of diabetes and a genetic susceptibility.

Your healthcare provider will do a physical exam and ask questions about your symptoms.

Type-1 diabetes is treated with insulin, exercise, and diet. Because of the risk of heart disease, controlling cholesterol levels through diet and exercise is also very important.

Daily exercise helps control diabetes. Follow your health care provider's advice about an exercise plan. A healthy diet is also an essential part of treatment. Don't skip meals. Try to eat at regular times and follow a balanced meal plan focusing on variety and portion control.

Learn all you can about diabetes.

Learn the techniques of self-monitoring of blood sugar and monitoring regularly. A glucometer (a small machine that tests a small sample of blood) allows for convenient, reliable and affordable testing anytime anywhere. Testing allows you to monitor and adjust your food intake, insulin amount and exercise activity levels to best meet your body's demands.

- Learn the signs and symptoms of high and low blood glucose levels and what to do.
- Keep glucose tablets handy for treating low blood sugar, if needed.
- Learn about diabetes meal planning.
- Get regular foot care by a foot care provider (e.g., podiatrist) and regular eye check ups.
- **Stop smoking.** Find a way to quit that works for you.
- Wear a medical alert-type bracelet or pendant to indicate you have diabetes and take insulin.
- Get medical care for any infection.
- A diabetes educator (CDE) and dietician (RD) can help you learn to better manage your diabetes.

To learn more about Facey's Diabetes-related classes, call toll free (866) 837-5605.